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ABSTRACT

The objectives of a university training program for rural social workers are to develop insights into cultural and stereotypical attitudes of social workers and to increase worker cultural sensitivity and awareness of value differences. The focus of the training is on the process by which workers evaluate extrinsic and intrinsic factors related to clients and clients' social situation. The model evolved is similar to those used in cross-cultural training, and requires workers to examine their own emotions, values, and self-esteem, and to be open to becoming involved and changed. The goal of training is to help workers gather information in a situation where facts are often less important than perceptions and attitudes. Major concepts are the historical context of today's rural family, human service workers as agents of the rural service delivery system, and the family as a social learning system. For each major concept, the paper lists important related concepts, and title, author, and publication date for resources (14, 11, and 10 resources, respectively) from various disciplines. Six related journals are also listed, with availability information. (MH)

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THE SOCIAL WORKER, THE COMMUNITY AND THE RURAL FAMILY: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKER TRAINING

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THE SOCIAL WORKER, THE COMMUNITY AND THE RURAL FAMILY: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKER TRAINING

The objectives of the training program are to develop insights into the cultural and stereotypical attitudes of workers which result in a normative frame of reference when dealing with a culturally different client group. The model is structured to increase worker cultural sensitivity and awareness of value differences. Regardless of worker training level or life experience, workers can broaden their understanding and knowledge of today's rural family.

The approach is based on the idea that if the basis for human service delivery is "to take the client where he or she is," then the focus of training should be upon the process by which the worker evaluates the extrinsic and intrinsic factors related to the client and the clients social situation.

Since no worker and client share exactly the same set of experiences, the processes which bridge the worker/client difference should be the same for all helping situations. As a result, the model that has evolved is similar to the approach that should be used in any cross-cultural training.

Harrison and Hopkins state that:

> "Education for cross-cultural applications should train the individual in a system of learning operations that is independent of settings, persons and other informative sources not found in the overseas environment. (clients community). If the trainee can be educated to be an effective and independent learner, he or she need not be filled with all the information he or she can contain before going into a new job." (P.380)

Frequently, the reason that training for rural service workers is requested is the fact that the workers interpersonal competencies, which have served well in past situations, are not now effective. The result is a demand for a workshop or course that "explains" the culturally different people, by analyzing and talking about them. This academic model has not been very effective in cross-cultural preparation for direct service in the "overseas" environment. The cross-cultural training model requires the opportunity for the workers to examine their own emotions, values, and self-esteem and to be open to becoming involved, and changed as a result of the learning process which includes the entire social environment. The goal of the training then becomes to provide assistance to the worker in gathering information, in a situation where facts are often less important than perceptions and attitudes. The information sources under this approach are the workers own feelings and experience, the clients situation and environment.

The following outline presents illustrative concepts related to each of these areas and potential resources drawn from several disciplines:

1. Historic Context - To understand today's rural family, workers and educators must understand the past and present economic, political and social environment of rural regions. The reactions of individuals to these contextual factors are labled as "family life styles." These reactive patterns can best be understood as a series of overlapping, interactive needs based events rather than subculturally determined behavior.

   Important Related Concepts: Impact of economic factors, subsistance life styles, small farm, small town extractive industries, industrial exploitation and single industry domination, colonization models, development impacts, the influence of policy and politics on communities.

   Resources Related to People, History and Politics:

   Berry, Wendell. The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture. Sierra Club Books, 1977.

   Caudill, Harry. Night Comes to the Cumberlands. Little, Brown, 1962.

   Coles, Robert. Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers. Volume II of Children of Crisis. Little, Brown, 1967.

Converse, Flora, Fujimoto, Rodefield, Voth. (Editors) Change in Rural America. C.V. Mosby Co. 1978

Gaventa, John. Power and Powerlessness. Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley. University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Kahn, Kathy. Hillbilly Women. Doubleday, 1973.

Kahn, Si. How People Get Power. Organizing Oppressed Communities for Action. McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Ryan, William. Blaming the Victim. Vintage Books, 1971.

Sanders, Irwin T. Rural Society. Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Shover, John. First Majority-Last Minority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America. Northern Illinois University Press, 1976.

"The New Rural America." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. January, 1977.

Vidich, Arthur and Joseph Bensman. Small Town in Mass Society: Class, Power and Religion in a Rural Community. Anchor Books, 1960.

Whisnant, David E. Modernizing the Mountaineer. People, Power and Planning in Appalachia. Burt Franklin and Co., 1980.

2. The Human Services Worker as Agent of the Rural Service Delivery System. The service worker, who has a personal value system, works through an agency, which has an organizational value system, and which is funded by a larger organization which also has a value system set forth in its policy positions. The purpose of these interactions is to provide services to clients, who have personal values, and who are part of a community which has values expressed as norms. The problem in much of the training and education related to serving rural clients is that only the client value system is placed under the microscope. It is much more important for the worker to understand his/her own value and need set and to know what influences their perceptions of people who do not completely share this set of behavior determining factors. (Note: The value and need difference between worker and agency or funding source is dealt with through in-service training under the title "Burn Out" or "Stress Management: and in which the worker is treated very much like a client.)

Important Related Concepts: Theories of change, value dilemmas of change agents, re-education and un-freezing, psycho-cultural processes, resistance to change, ethnocentrism, labeling, media impact, perception, cognitive dissonance, attribution theory. Rural service delivery systems---natural networks, primary and secondary services, needs assessments impact, regionalism and local control, generalist vs. specialist delivery systems, vertical and horizontal control structure.

Resources Related to Service Delivery and Service Program :

Green, Ronald K and Stephen A. Webster, ed. Social Work in Rural Areas. Preparation and Practice. The University of Tennessee School of Social Work. Knoxville, 1976.

Jankovic, Joanne, Ronald K. Green and Shanler Cronk, eds. Juvenile Justice in Rural America. Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1980.

Johnson, Wayne (ed.). Rural Human Services. Peacock, 1980.

Martinez-Brawley, Emilia. (ed) Pioneer Efforts in Rural Social Welfare. Pennsylvanie State University Press, 1980.

Mental Health and Rural America: An Overview and Annotated Bibliography. National Institute of Mental Health. DHEW Publication No. (ADM) 78-753. Printed 1979.

Rodefeld, Richard D. et. al., (eds.) Change in Rural America: Causes, Consequences, and Alternatives. The C.V. Mosby Co., St. Louis, 1978.

Roemer, Milton I. Rural Health Care. The C.V. Mosby Company. St. Louis, 1976.

Rural Courts: The Effect of Space and Distance on the Administration of Justice. A publication of the National Center for State courts. Publication No. R0032. July 1977.

Sher, Jonathan P. (ed.). Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom. Westview Press, Boulder Colorado. 1977.

Zimbardo, Phillip G. Influencing Attitudes and Changing Behavior. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. 1977.

Perry, Huey. "They'll Cut Off Your Project" : A Mingo County Chronicle. Praeger Publishers, 1972.

3. The Family as a Social Learning System.

There is no rural family type, since there are as many different family types in rural areas as there are in urban areas of the country. There is no unique quality that is exhibited only by Americans who live in the area defined geographically or politically as rural. However, there are social patterns that, due to economic, environmental or experiental factors, are exhibited by families which have similar needs or situations. These shared experiences range from those that are old timey, traditional, or subsistance life style based; to modern, main-stream or contract based life styles.

Important Related Concepts: Socialization, value systems, fundamentalism as a value system, poverty, powerlessness, motivation, "cultural deprivation", behavior as a function of environment and personality, stereotyping, primary and secondary groups, networking.

Resources Related to the Rural Community, Understanding Socio-Cultural Change:

Bee, Robert L. Patterns and Processes. An Introduction to Anthropological Strategies for the Study of Sociocultural Change. The Free Press. 1974

Bradshaw, Ted K. and Edward J. Blakely. Rural Communities in Advanced Industrial Society. Praeger Publishers. 1979.

Collins, Alice H. Natural Helping Networks. National Association of Social Workers, 1976.

Keddie, Nell (ed). The Myth of Cultural Deprivation. Penguin, 1973.

Harrison, Roger and Richard Hopkins. "The Design of Cross-Cultural Training: An Alternative to the University Model." Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, III, No. 4, 1967, P.431-460.

Lofland, John. Analyzing Social Settings. Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971.

Sarason, Seymour B. The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1978.

Stephenson, John B. Shiloh: A Mountain Community. University of Kentucky Press, 1968.

Wrong, Dennis H. Skeptical Sociology. Columbia University Press, 1976.

Yetman, Norman R. and C. Hoy Steele. Majority and Minority: The Dynamics of Racial and Ethnic Relations. Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 1975.

Other Related Journals:

Appalachian Journal. A Regional Studies Review. 132 Sanford Hall, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. 28608.

Human Services in the Rural Environment. School of Social Work. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Office of Continuing Social Work Education, 1838 Terrace Ave., Knoxville, TN. 37916.

Laurel Leaves. Appalachian Consortium Press, 202 Appalachian St., Boone, N.C. 28608.

Laurel Leaves, Special Edition. A Checklist and Purchase Guide for School and Community Libraries in Appalachia. By Jim Wayne Miller. Distributed free of charge by the Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, North Carolina.

Mountain Life and Work. The Magazine of the Appalachian South. Council of the Southern Mountains, Drawer N. Clintwood, VA. 24228.

Southern Exposure. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.